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ABSTRACT

A synthesis of the literature on the advertising and promoting of online bibliographic retrieval services in academic libraries was conducted to suggest specific approaches and methods that can be used to make the academic community more aware of these services. Six levels of activity in program planning for promoting online services are identified and discussed: general program guidelines and statement of objectives; research and study of the problem; identification of user characteristics; selection of strategies to achieve objectives; operation of the program; and evaluation and revision. Various techniques and strategies for developing and promoting materials in eight different formats are discussed and a model promotional program is developed to enable managers and librarians to follow a systematic approach. Comparison of promotional materials developed for online services in 27 academic libraries with selected general promotional programs and materials that have received the John Cotton Dana Library Publicity Award shows a wide range in the level of professionalism and sophistication. It is suggested that efforts to-date in promoting these services have been ineffectual and that this is an area where librarians can learn from other related disciplines. A list of additional techniques for promotion and a bibliography are appended. (JPF)

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PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY FOR ON-LINE BIBLIOGRAPHIC SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

A Research Paper

Presented to

the Faculty of the School of Education

San Jose State University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Jeff Paul

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Plan B

by

Herbert Jeffery Paul

May 1978

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The use of computerized information services in libraries developed as a result of the so-called "information explosion" that took place in the middle of the Twentieth Century. Today a number of libraries and research centers are offering a variety of services to assist their users in obtaining the unique information they need amidst the plethora of information available. One such service is computerized, on-line, bibliographic data services. The history and development of these services will be briefly discussed in this chapter.

Statement of the Problem

It is the purpose of this study to: 1) make a review of the literature regarding promotional activities for on-line bibliographic services in academic libraries, 2) summarize the findings of the literature survey to describe and determine the most effective techniques available for promoting these services, 3) outline strategies and guidelines for developing promotional materials in the different formats, and 4) determine the state of the art of promotion for these services as compared to library publicity in general.

History of Computerized Bibliographic Data Services in Libraries

The history and background of library uses of computers has been discussed by Lancaster,[1] Hayes and Becker,[2] and more recently by Williams.[3]

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[1]Frederick Wilfred Lancaster. "On-Line Information Systems." In Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science 20: pp. 394-405.

[2]Robert M. Hayes and Joseph Becker. Handbook of Data Processing in in Libraries. (New York: Becker and Hayes, 1970.)

[3]Martha E. Williams. "Opinion Paper: Data Bases-A History of Developments and Trends from 1966 through 1975." Journal of the American Society for Information Science 28: pp. 71-78, March 1977.

In the 1950's early efforts towards the mechanization of bibliographic data files was being accomplished by means of punched card storage systems. These punched card systems, though isolated and rare, gave way to the magnetic tape storage devices that were being developed in the 1960's. At the same time many of the major indexing and abstracting services were switching over to computerized indexing and printing devices in order to adapt to the huge volume of literature that was developing. As a by-product of the switch to computer based printing techniques, extensive tape files of bibliographic data were available.

Most of the computerized bibliographic data files that developed in the early 1960's were developed in government and industrial facilities. The high initial costs for developing and operating such systems were the limiting factors in setting up and offering such services.

One of the first successful on-line information systems was developed by Kessler at MIT in 1962.[4] There an experimental system in physics known as TIP allowed users immediate access to the information in the files. Prior to this study information had to be gathered from the files off-line, or via batch mode. Until the early 1970's most all of the accessing of information in bibliographic data files was gathered off-line. In such systems the bibliographic data was added to the files at a particular time of the day (usually during the regular working hours) and at another time of the day the searches took place. As the technologies allowed, more systems offered on-line, or immediate access to the information in the files.

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[4]Frederick Wilfred Lancaster and E. G. Fayen. Information Retrieval On-Line. (Los Angeles: Melville, 1973.) pp. 117-119.

One of the first large scale on-line bibliographic retrieval systems was known as RECON.[5] This system was begun in 1965 and by 1969 was fully operational. RECON was developed by the Lockheed Missiles and Space Company for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The information retrieval system used in RECON later was used in the DIALOG system that became available to the public from Lockheed.[6] The DIALOG system became operational in 1966 and by 1977 was offering over 55 different databases to its users.

At about the same time RECON and DIALOG were developing, the Systems Development Corporation, SDC, was developing a set of search programs known as ORBIT.[7] The ORBIT software is used in the MEDLINE service which is offered by the National Library of Medicine to its users. Today SDC offers over thirty data bases to its users through its ORBIT service.

In the late 1960's a system was developed to provide direct access to abstracts of news and current awareness information. This system is known as the New York Times Information Bank.[8] This system was begun in 1969 and by 1971 was available on-line. It is unique among the other data bases since it is updated daily from the printed information contained in the New York Times Newspaper. In addition to the information contained in the New York Times, it also indexes ten other large regional newspapers and it indexes the information contained in over 70 widely read magazines and journals.

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[5]Ibid., pp. 103-109.

[6]Ibid., pp. 73-81.

[7]Ibid., pp. 101-102.

[8]Ibid., pp. 89-101.

During an on-line search the user has the option of having the bibliographic information printed on-line or off-line, at a reduced rate. Frequently these are printed off-line to minimize costs. As the major on-line bibliographic retailers have increased the access to information, new services have developed to get the textual literature to the user. Today a number of document delivery services are being developed to speed the documents to the users of these on-line bibliographic services.

In 1974 a study of the users of on-line bibliographic services was conducted by Wanger and others.[9] In the study, 1273 respondents to the questionnaire revealed that 31% of the users were affiliated with educational institutions. Universities and colleges constituted 29% of the users of on-line bibliographic services in the survey. A summary of the findings of this survey relating to promotion will be discussed in the next chapter of this paper.

Background of the Problem

As libraries have begun to offer these sophisticated, new bibliographic services to their users, problems have developed in reaching the larger audience that could benefit from these services. An area to which little attention has been given is the study of promotional techniques and devices that can be used to educate the public that these services exist. Today we are finding increasing attention for this subject in the literature. In a recent article, Ferguson discusses the growing interest in marketing for on-line bibliographic services.[10] Whereas marketing

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[9]Judith Wanger, Mary Fishburn, and Carlos Cuadra. On-Line Impact Study: survey report of on-line users, 1974-1975. (Santa Monica, Calif.: Systems Development Corporation, 1975.) p. 2.

[10]Douglas Ferguson. "Marketing On-Line Services in the University." On-Line 1: pp. 15-23, July 1977.

addresses the broader concerns of identifying potential users and determining their information needs, attention needs to be given to the specific approaches and methods that can be used to make the public aware of these services.

To illustrate the point that there has been a lack of concern for this subject, particularly in the early development of these services, the writer would like to cite two early texts on the subject. There is no mention of the need for advertising these services in Lancaster and Fayen's 1973 work, Information Retrieval On-Line,[11] and in Hayes and Becker's 1970 Handbook for Data Processing in Libraries[12] only two sentences of the over 870 pages of text address the question of advertising and publicity for these services.

Stern and others have stated in this regard:

> "Attention to systems design and related technical matters has resulted in a relative neglect of the promotion of SDI (Selective Dissemination of Information) services to users. Further, in instances where SDI services are promoted, little attempt is made to assess effectiveness relative to alternative promotional strategies."[13]

Wax has given us a justification for the need to promote these services for the following reasons:

> "The introduction of computer-based reference services requires an active program in user education and service promotion. Because these services imply a new means by which the user obtains information and also requires that the user pay for the information services, the library staff has the responsibility of making the

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[11] Frederick Wilfred Lancaster and E. G. Fayen, loc. cit.

[12] Robert M. Hayes and Joseph Becker, loc. cit.

[13] Louis W. Stern; C. Samuel Craig; Anthony J. La Greca; and Gerald J. Lazorick. "Promotion of Information Services: an evaluation of alternative approaches." Journal of the American Society for Information Science 24: pp. 171-179, May-June 1973.

> user aware of the existence of this new local service capability, of demonstrating the value of computerized bibliographic searching and of indicating the service limitations."[14]

Need for the Study

In order to reach the larger audience of potential users of bibliographic data services, attention needs to be given to the advertising methods and techniques that can be used in marketing these types of services. Whereas marketing addresses the broader questions regarding user needs, etc., this paper will seek to discuss the techniques available for promoting these services.

Lipow has stated, "when it comes to trying to educate our patrons, we try one thing, and if it does not work, we try another, and so on."[15] This should not, and need not, be the case. On-line bibliographic services are expensive, and once the manager of these services has trained the staff, rented or purchased expensive equipment, and set aside special areas for offering these services, it is not enough merely to type up a flyer, post it on a couple of bulletin boards, and wait for results. A good deal of attention has gone into the training for the staff and the selection of the hardware and software. Promotion for these services merits similar attention, especially prior to the initiation of the service. In a study at MIT, which will be discussed in the next chapter,

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[14]David M. Wax. A Handbook for the Introduction of On-Line Bibliographic Search Services into Academic Libraries. (Washington: Association of Research Libraries, June 1976.) p. 24.

[15]Anne G. Lipow. "User Education and Publicity for On-Line Services," in On-Line Bibliographic Services, p. 67. Edited by Peter G. Watson. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1977.)

it was stated that "until these services are well established, a sustained level of promotional activity is essential."[16]

Limitations

This study is selective in that it will concern itself with advertising and promotion for on-line bibliographic services in academic libraries. While other types of libraries may have special groups they cater to, in this study attention will be given to reaching the potential users of these services in academic libraries. Even though this study will concern itself with promotion in the academic setting, generalizations may be made for other types of libraries and research centers offering these services to their clients.

It should also be stated that this is a study of advertising and promotional techniques and methods and it is not a study of public relations, nor is it a marketing study. The terms publicity and public relations are often used synonymously by many persons, but they are not the same. Publicity may be a part of a public relations program, but it is not and should not constitute a public relations effort by itself.

Definition of Terms

Advertising. Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines advertising as "the action of calling something (as a commodity for sale, a service offered or desired) to the attention of the public especially by means of printed or broadcast paid announcements."

Publicity. Publicity is defined by Webster as "an act or device designed to attract public interest." Advertising and publicity are terms that can be used synonymously.

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[16]Alan R. Benenfeld and others. Nasic at MIT. Final Report. 1 March 1974-28 February 1975. (Cambridge, Mass.: Electronic Systems Lab, MIT, February 28, 1975.) p. 4-11.

Public Relations. Webster has defined public relations as "the promotion of rapport and goodwill between a person, firm, or institution and other persons, special publics, or the community at large through the distribution of interpretative material...those functions of a corporation, organization, branch of military service, etc. concerned with informing the public of its activities, policies, etc. and attempting to create favorable public opinion." Publicity and advertising, then, are techniques that can be used to improve the public relations image an institution has with its public(s).

Marketing. Publicity and advertising are also components of a marketing program. Ferguson has stated, "Marketing is not just selling what you have through a publicity blitz. Marketing represents an organized way of offering on-line services that includes user interests, data bases, communication methods, imaginative design of services and products and feedback that improves what you are doing."[17] Kuehl has stated that marketing "involves defining markets; developing, pricing, and distributing products; and, stimulating demand through persuasive communication."[18] His article gives a good definition and description of the processes involved in marketing goods and services.

Organization of the Remainder of this Paper

The next chapter in this paper will include a review of the literature, identification of the general and specialized works on publicity and promotion, and a description of the methodology that has been adopted for this study.

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[17] Douglas Ferguson, op. cit., p. 15.

[18] Phillip G. Kuehl. "Marketing Perspectives for 'ERIC Like' Information Systems." Journal of the American Society for Information Science 23: pp. 359-364, November-December 1972.

Chapter III will include a model for developing a systematic approach to promotion and summary of the information gathered. Each of the promotional techniques and devices that were identified will be discussed with suggestions for developing materials in the different formats.

Chapter IV will include a comparison of the state of the art of advertising and promotion for on-line services with library publicity in general.

The final chapter will include a summary and conclusion of the findings of this study and suggestions for further research.

Chapter II

PLAN FOR THE STUDY

An investigation into the literature was made to survey and gather information regarding publicity methods used in advertising and promoting on-line bibliographic services in academic libraries. In addition to the information available in the literature, promotional materials were gathered from the Machine Assisted Reference Section of the American Library Association. In addition to these materials, scrapbooks of award winning John Cotton Dana Library Publicity Awards were also perused to determine the level of sophistication present in general library publicity efforts.

Literature Survey

The investigation into the literature revealed that very little has been written regarding publicity and advertising for on-line bibliographic services. While discussion of the need for such attention was given, this writer could find little information specific to the subject. The scope of the search was widened to gather general information regarding publicity and advertising in libraries. Some of the more general works on the subject were consulted and parallel applications for advertising on-line services were easily made.

The search included an investigation into the following: the years 1970-1977 of Library Literature, the years 1974-1977 of the Social Sciences Citation Index, the resources available in the department of Librarianship at San Jose State University, ERIC materials in Resources in Education, and government documents related to publicity and promotion for libraries in the United States.

General Works

Some of the major, general works on the subject of publicity that were identified in the search are:

1. Angoff, Allan, ed. Public Relations for Libraries: essays in communication techniques. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973.

2. Lendt, David L., ed. The Publicity Process. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1975.

3. Loizeaux, Marie D. Publicity Primer. New York: Wilson, 1967.

4. Sherman, Steve. ABC's of Library Promotion. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1971.

The mechanics of publicity has been covered in each of these works with Loizeaux's book being one of the earliest treatments of the subject. Her Publicity Primer is now in its 4th edition, 1967, and may be easily supplemented by each of the other works cited above. She lists a number of methods that librarians can use to promote their services and programs. The work by Sherman would make an excellent supplement to Loizeaux's treatment of the subject. Both of the works are practical discussions, and Sherman gives examples of library news releases that have been prepared for newspapers, radio, and television. His text also includes a number of glossaries of terms used in working with the different formats.

David Lendt's Publicity Process is the only work listed above that was not written especially for librarians. It has been included above because it presents very concise discussions on a number of different media, and because each of the chapters was written by experts in their fields. The chapter on photography and art is especially worthwhile in this work.

Allan Angoff's Public Relations for Libraries is the only text that does not give a practical discussion of the subject. His work is more philosophical and theoretical in scope and it includes articles written by

a number of distinguished scholars. An example is Howard Hitchens, Executive Director of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, and his discussion of technology and its impact on libraries and public relations.[19]

Specialized Works

Six titles were identified as giving special emphasis to promotion for on-line bibliographic services. Each of these works will be discussed separately due to their unique treatments of the subject.

1. Benenfeld, Alan R. and others. "NASIC at MIT. Final Report. 1 March 1974-28 February 1975." Cambridge, Mass.: Electronic Systems Lab, MIT, February 28, 1975. [available from ERIC ED 107 226]

Benenfeld's study is a report of the Northeast Academic Science Information Center at MIT. The information presented in the report was gathered from testing, user surveys, and fifteen months of operation. This is an exhaustive report on their computer-based reference search services that were being offered to their users on a fee-for-service basis. Their findings in the area of publicity and promotion will be briefly discussed here.

In general, in the conclusion of their study, it was reported that:

> "Promotional efforts need to be very intense, even considerably more than the fairly intense MIT efforts to date. A variety of promotional mechanisms must be actively pursued both to increase general awareness of this new, and generally untried, service among potential users as well as to turn awareness into actual use, which requires stepping over a fee-for-service threshold."[20]

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[19]Howard Hitchens. "Technology, Libraries, and Public Relations," in Public Relations for Libraries, pp. 199-218. Edited by Allan Angoff. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973.)

[20]Alan R. Benenfeld and others. "NASIC at MIT. Final Report. 1 March 1974-28 February 1975." (Cambridge, Mass.: Electronic Systems Lab, MIT, February 28, 1975.) pp. 1-2.

They utilized a variety of techniques to promote the service. One of the most frequently used publicity mechanisms was demonstrations. They also used posters, newspaper articles, library newsletters, paid advertisements, faculty announcements, an information booth, free mini-searches, talks, seminars, television spots, and an Information Bazaar which drew between 300 to 400 persons. In regard to the effectiveness of their publicity efforts they had this to say:

> "All the publicity mechanisms we have tried have been at least somewhat successful. Awareness about the service is most often achieved by word-of-mouth, but direct mailings of brochures and other printed resources are often the catalyst for 'Hey, have you heard about NASIC?' Translation of awareness into use requires additional effort in demonstrating cost effectiveness of the service. Search demonstrations at the terminal are most effective when they can be oriented to the current needs, often interdisciplinary, of the audience; canned demonstrations are much less effective."[21]

Experience taught them that the more individualized and spontaneous the demonstrations, the greater the impact on the public, and the greater the response. When they began giving their demonstrations the entire program was well planned and rehearsed, and a library of search examples were used in the demonstrations. Later, as they acquired more experience with the language, and the data bases, less formalized presentations were delivered. In order to point out the need for personalized approaches in promotion they stated:

> "Experimentation has shown that the more personalized the publicity effort, the greater the chance of 'capturing' the prospective user: that is, the more the prospective user can relate the potential of this service to his or her own research, the greater the chance that the person will become an actual user."[22]

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[21] Ibid., pp. 1-4.

[22] Ibid., pp. 1-7.

They also found that it was important to provide a variety of promotional materials and offer regularly scheduled demonstrations and distributions to pick up new members of the academic community. In their conclusion they stated:

> "Publicity efforts to acquaint people with and encourage the use of computerized literature searching must be intensive, varied, and continuous. This is a library service unlike those which people are used to; it therefore requires considerable education of potential users to demonstrate the benefits of machine retrieval...It is obvious from various promotional techniques attempted that people respond best to publicity which is individualized and personally relevant."[23]

The MIT study is an exemplary model. This author commends its authors and recommends it to managers and librarians developing on-line information services in their libraries. The findings of this MIT study have been condensed into a booklet of recommendations written by David Wax. This booklet will be discussed later in this chapter.

2. Ferguson, Douglas. "On-Line Services in the University." On-Line 1: pp. 15-23, July 1977.

Douglas Ferguson is the Head of the Data Information Service of the Stanford University Libraries. In his article he expresses the need for marketing on-line services in a systematic manner. Along with the text of his article are a number of illustrations of effective posters, booklets, flyers, and handouts that have been developed to promote these services in academic libraries in the United States and Canada. His article focuses on user relevance and expresses the need for a total, organized, and paced program. In regard to the effectiveness of the different techniques, he stated:

> "When we asked a sample of our users how they learned about the library's computer search service almost half said from posters or brochures. The other half heard

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[23]Ibid., pp. 7-13.

> about it from librarians or friends...stories in campus newspapers and library and computer center newsletters are helpful but they need to be done regularly because of the change in the student, faculty, and staff populations."[24]

He suggests that when developing promotional materials it is wise to model our materials after those that have been developed and found effective at other institutions.

3. Lipow, Anne G. "User Education and Publicity for On-Line Services," in On-Line Bibliographic Services: where we are, where we're going, pp. 67-77. Edited by Peter G. Watson. Chicago: American Library Association, 1977.

Anne Lipow is the Head of the Cooperative Services Department at the University of California, Berkeley, Libraries. Her article is a report of a speech that was delivered at the Centennial Conference of the American Library Association, July 18, 1976. She expresses the need to "do it well" when promoting these services. She states that some of the data bases will need more promotion than others. Some of the more popular ones, like the New York Times Information Bank, may gather tremendous support simply by word of mouth, while others may require considerable promotion. A list of helpful tips and suggestions is included at the end of the article.

4. Stern, Louis W.; Craig, C. Samuel; La Greca, Anthony J.; and Lazorick, Gerald J. "Promotion of Information Services: an evaluation of alternative approaches." Journal of the American Society for Information Science 24: pp. 171-179, May-June 1973.

This article reports on the findings of a study at Ohio State University where the effectiveness of their promotional programs for their SDI services was evaluated in regard to the effectiveness of three alternative approaches. The service provided during the study was a batch-processed

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[24]Douglas Ferguson, op. cit., p. 19.

current awareness service that was available to users free of charge. The three promotional techniques used in the study were: 1) a publicity blitz in which brochures and announcements were mailed to members of the academic community, 2) telephone solicitations, and 3) an opinion leadership program in which specialized searches were run for selected faculty members that had been identified as opinion leaders.

In the evaluation of each of the promotional methods, analysis was made in terms of: 1) market penetration, 2) user satisfaction, 3) the influence of the various components in each of the programs, and 4) cost effectiveness. In the measure of market penetration it was found that the publicity blitz and the telephone solicitation resulted in 54% of the faculty becoming users during the two month period of the study. There appeared to be no significant differences in user satisfaction as related to the different techniques. The greatest measure of effectiveness appeared to be that of cost effectiveness. It was found that the publicity blitz was the most cost effective method of promoting the service with telephone solicitation following closely behind. Opinion leadership appeared to be the least cost effective method of promotion.

They emphasized that the information specialists must be deeply concerned with the effectiveness of their promotional program. Personal contacts with patrons played an important role in user satisfaction. They stated:

> "a paramount concern in promoting an information service seems to be the face-to-face interaction of the information specialists with the prospective user. Without this key ingredient the effectiveness of any promotional effort is likely to be jeopardized. The information specialist plays an important role that cannot be replaced by a set of printed instructions and a form. The personal interaction also appears essential in insuring a high level of user satisfaction. The Promotional strategy for SDI and similar services must become

a fundamental concern of those involved with these types of services."[25]

In their conclusion they outlined the basic functions that promotional programs should serve. They stated:

> "Effective promotion of information services must serve three basic functions; it must be 1) informational, 2) educational, and 3) persuasive. Prospective users must not only be told that the information services exist (informational), but they must be properly educated as to their use and benefit. Finally, the informational and educational aspects must combine to persuade the potential user to decide to become an actual user of the system."[26]

Even though this study measured the effectiveness of three promotional methods for an off-line information retrieval service, it has been included here because it is one of the few studies of the effectiveness of alternative promotional techniques. Their publicity blitz technique was actually accomplished by means of direct mailings and was not a publicity blitz in the true sense. Signs and posters were not displayed on campus during the course of the study. Nevertheless, the publicity blitz was found to be the most cost effective method of promoting the service.

5. Wanger, Judith; Fishburn, Mary; and Cuadra, Carlos. On-Line Impact Study; a survey of users, 1974-1975. Santa Monica, Calif.: Systems Development Corporation, 1976.

This study is a report of on-line bibliographic services that were going on in over 1250 libraries and research centers in 1974 and 1975. They report that this figure probably represented about two-thirds of the total on-line using community at the time of the study. Even though this survey gathered information from the general on-line community, it is important to the academic setting as a monitor of promotional activities

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[25]Louis W. Stern and others, op. cit., pp. 177-178.

[26]Ibid., p. 178.

engaged in all types of libraries and research centers. The writers expressed the need for promoting these services in educational institutions because:

> "Use of on-line systems may be the first foray into literature searching services for many of the educational organizations. Since their users would not be aware of this new service, there is a special need to push it."[27]

Their findings in regard to the promotion of services revealed that about 83% of the managers formally announced or promoted the service in some way. The study revealed that some of the managers had reservations about fully promoting the service because they worried that it might increase their workload and burden the staff.

Roughly 80% of the respondents to the questionnaire worked in libraries or information centers. Educational organizations exhibited a slightly greater tendency to promote on-line services than government and commercial organizations. The most popular promotional methods used were newsletters, flyers, announcements to different user groups, group meetings, demonstrations, and sample searches. The institutions offering free sample searches found this method very effective. In the conclusion of the study it was pointed out that promotion is an area where the on-line suppliers and other members of the information industry could be providing more assistance to their users.

6. Wax, David M. A Handbook for the Introduction of On-Line Bibliographic Search Services into Academic Libraries. Occasional Paper Number Four, Association of Research Libraries, Office of University Library Management Studies. Washington, D.C., June 1976.

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[27] Judith Wanger and others., op. cit., p. 44.

This handbook was written primarily for library administrators and is intended as a guide for those who are beginning to offer on-line services. Many of the recommendations in the handbook are based on the findings of the NASIC at MIT study by Benenfeld which was briefly discussed previously in this chapter. The recommendations in the area of service promotion might be considered "bare bones" since much of the discussion is written in terms of minimally acceptable levels of promotion. Four pages of text addresses the area of user education and service promotion.

He states that the most active period of service promotion should occur during the early months of the service, and that it is necessary to continue this program on a regular basis. The essential elements of the promotional program should include: a brochure, signs or posters, and demonstrations. It is also suggested that information be disseminated through the library newsletter, the college newspaper, and alumni and faculty bulletins.

The essential elements of the brochure are:

> "A general description of the computer search service, a brief discussion of the disciplines covered by the accessible data bases, the charges for the service, the procedures for using the service, and a telephone number and location at which additional information can be obtained."[28]

He explains that some libraries have listed elaborate descriptions of the data bases, however, there is some indication that more information is frequently included than the potential user is likely to read.

In regard to signs and posters, he stated that they should be posted at the service site to describe the services provided there. Signs should also be posted near printed indexes to notify users that the information printed in those indexes is also available on-line.

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[28]Ibid., p. 25.

Live demonstrations are suggested as being one of the more effective promotional devices. Day-to-day library staff relations with the public should also promote the use of the service. Word of mouth seems to favorably promote the service when satisfied customers speak out. It is very important, therefore, that the service be operated efficiently since dissatisfied users frequently have a greater impact on public awareness and opinion than satisfied users.

Promotional Materials Gathered by the Machine Assisted Reference Section of the American Library Association

Since July 1976 a new organization has been addressing the problems involved in setting up and offering on-line bibliographic data services in libraries. This group is the Machine Assisted Reference Section of the Reference and Adult Service Division of the American Library Association. One venture that they began in July 1976 was to gather together their forms and brochures that were used in the day-to-day operation of their services. To date they have gathered publicity materials from over two dozen institutions. This writer had an opportunity to peruse this file, thanks to the efforts of Peter Watson, past chairperson of MARS.

From first investigation into the materials in this file, it appears that we have much to learn in terms of advertising for these services. Many of the materials affirm David Wax's belief that more information is included on these forms than the potential user is likely to read. There are isolated incidences of success in promotional design, but many of the efforts appear to be lacking in design and content. The results of the investigation into this file of materials will be discussed in Chapter IV.

John Cotton Dana Publicity Awards

The John Cotton Dana Publicity Awards were established in 1943 by the Council of the American Library Association for the purpose of encouraging publicity in all types of libraries. Yearly awards are presented on the basis of scrapbooks, which are submitted showing the publicity efforts for the year, or showing promotion for a special event. Today the awards are given in a number of different areas, ranging from school library publicity to network publicity efforts. A list of each year's winners is available from the American Library Association's Headquarters Library. The scrapbooks circulate through interlibrary loan.

Several of these scrapbooks were perused to get an idea of the level of sophistication present in the best promotional and publicity endeavors developed in academic libraries in the United States. These materials were studied in terms of quality and style and were compared with the publicity materials that were available in the MARS publicity file. Discussion and a comparison of these two groups of materials will be presented in Chapter IV.

Data Collection Method

The survey descriptive data collection method used in this paper has been discussed by Goldhor.[29] Rather than relying on a questionnaire, or other sampling techniques, the writer has conducted a survey of the literature and gathered materials on the subject from a variety of sources. The nature of promotion and the current state of the art lends the survey descriptive methodology to be most appropriate for this study. The survey

[29]Herbert Goldhor. "Survey Research," in An Introduction to Scientific Research in Librarianship, pp. 116-140. (Washington: United States Office of Education, Bureau of Research, 1969.)

descriptive method has been adopted because the subject has not been previously investigated at length and because previous research by Wanger,[30] Benenfeld,[31] and Stern,[32] has measured the use of promotional materials on quantitative and effectiveness measures.

This study is intended to survey the promotional techniques available and discuss each, outlining some of their advantages and mentioning some tips to remember in developing materials in the different formats. A model was developed so that managers and librarians can follow a systematic approach to promoting these services. It is hoped that, as a result of this study, librarians and managers will find it easier to produce and develop promotional materials for their on-line bibliographic services.

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[30] Op. cit.

[31] Op. cit.

[32] Op. cit.

Chapter III

MODEL FOR DEVELOPING A PROMOTIONAL PROGRAM

Successful ventures in many fields of endeavor are frequently achieved through systematic approaches to problem solving. This is also true in planning for promotional activities. No matter how noble the intent behind a program, it cannot be successful without careful planning and forethought. In this chapter a model will be presented to show the steps involved in planning for promotional activities. In addition, a core of promotional devices will be discussed as a guide for those developing a promotional program for their on-line service for the first time.

Program Planning

Successful innovation and promotion requires at least three elements: 1) an individual who is concerned about the effectiveness of the promotional program and is motivated by the desire for improvement, 2) a supportive administration, and 3) a carefully designed plan for developing and analyzing the effectiveness of the program. In this section, discussion will be made of the steps involved in program planning.

In planning for promotion at least six levels of activity are required. They are: 1) general program guidelines and statement of objectives, 2) research and study of the problem, 3) identification of user characteristics, 4) selection of strategies to achieve the objectives, 5) operation of the program, and 6) evaluation and revision. Each of these activities will be discussed separately.

General Program Guidelines and Statement of Objectives. The appropriate place to begin any program is with goals and objectives. What is it you hope to accomplish? What are your aims and purposes? Do you want to

change habits, secure action, or establish goodwill? Goals are written statements of general purpose that are not usually easily achieved. They are long range statements that outline and limit the direction of your program. Objectives are much more specific. They are written statements of purpose that serve as strategies to achieve the goals. Objectives are usually much easier to achieve, and should be written out in clear, measurable terms. The objectives should have set time limits and performance criteria whenever possible.

If your objective is to improve awareness of your service, what level of awareness do you expect to achieve as a result of your promotional program? Should 25% of the students and faculty know of the service? 30%? Do you want to increase the number of searches performed? If so, how much? When will you check to determine whether you have reached the objective? Through writing objectives in exact terms, you can later determine whether or not your ventures have been successful. Written goals and objectives should help to guide you throughout the project. They should serve as guidelines to direct your actions and channel your activities. Additional information on program planning and operation with goals and objectives is readily available in the literature.

Research and Study of the Program. This step in the process should help you to gather information from a number of sources. The investigation should take place on at least three levels: in the literature, at local and regional levels, and with commercial vendors.

The investigation should determine which universities in the area are offering similar services. It would be wise to plan a visit with them to

see how their operation works. If possible, get some samples of their promotional materials. How effective were they? What problems did they encounter? Which seemed to be the most effective? What is their clientele like? Through answering questions like these you will be better able to build a strong promotional program avoiding some of the pitfalls they encountered.

At your campus the investigation should identify and determine the resources and services available. Is there a graphics or duplicating center where you can get professional assistance? What will it cost you? Which publications or other campus forums can be used to disseminate your message? At this point you will be making contacts that will later become very valuable.

The investigation should also identify what type of assistance the commercial vendors are willing to give you. When these services were first developing little or no assistance was provided by the commercial vendors. Now they are improving their service relations with the users. Today they are offering promotional assistance in a number of different areas. They frequently help out in the early stages of promotion with free demonstration assistance.

Identification of User Characteristics. Whom do you expect to be serving? This question should have been answered long ago with the determination of which data bases were going to be offered. Generally, on-line services in the academic setting have three types of publics: students, faculty, and the general public. Do you expect to be catering to graduate students? Faculty? Once this has been determined, which forums can be used to reach them? Where can you expect to find them? Where will they see your message? What are their attitudes? What are their pressures and concerns? What appeals to them--simplifying their information needs?

Are they really concerned about satisfying their information needs or do they really want to have more efficient use of their time and more leisure time? Through answering questions of this type you will gain a better understanding of your users and therefore find it easier to communicate with them.

Selection of Strategies. This is where a determination should be made on which media are most appropriate to reach the audience. The decision of the proper medium for advertising and carrying your message is a major one because unless the proper audience is reached, much of the expanded creative effort may be wasted. What are the advantages of the different media? Which materials (formats) might the user be most likely to come across? Where would they be likely to see it?

It should be realized that no single channel of communication will reach everyone. The users are unique because their needs arise at different times. The academic institution's clientele is dynamic. Students and faculty are continually entering and leaving the institution, and it may take three or four announcements before they realize that you have something of value to them. Therefore, several different techniques and media must be developed and utilized to spread your message.

Operation of the Program. This is where the actual work gets done. The day-to-day, week-to-week activities must be planned, scheduled, and coordinated. The operation and management of the promotional program, as well as the entire on-line operation, must be well organized.

Perhaps the appropriate place to begin is with a promotional calendar. With a promotional calendar you can pace your efforts, sustain your enthusiasm, and regularly disseminate information. What will you be releasing? How many copies are needed? On what date? Who will be responsible?

What will it cost? To whom is it going to be sent? Questions like these must be answered to get the program going and to keep it going. It is best to plan early because the development of promotional materials requires a good deal of time.

A promotion file should be established. Every time a news release is issued or a demonstration takes place it should be written down. Statistics on all of the promotional activities should be recorded so that you can monitor your entire program. This will also be of assistance with the development of new materials. How many persons attended the demonstration? How much did it cost? How many posters were run? The file should include copies and records of everything issued and released. Newspaper clippings may be of tremendous assistance in putting out late news releases.

Placement, too, is an important part of promotion. There are three types of placements: point of traffic, point of service, and point of need. Point of traffic placement is the selection and placement of promotional materials in those strategic locations where the greatest number of persons are likely to see it. These locations in and around libraries are generally near the entrance and exit points, copy machines, and drinking fountains. Point of service placement is placement at the service areas. Reference and information desks are point of service locations. Point of need placement is satisfied by placing the announcements and signs near the printed indexes and abstracts. Brief statements in those locations can effectively promote the service and satisfy the needs of frustrated potential users.

Evaluation and Revision. Evaluation is the means of determining the effectiveness of the entire promotional program in order that revision and improvement of the service can take place. Each of the individual promotional activities should be evaluated in terms of market penetration and cost effectiveness.

Market penetration and user awareness can be determined by means of a questionnaire or some other information-gathering mechanism that can be administered at the completion of the user's search. The evaluation should determine whether the operational objectives that were set at the beginning of the project have been achieved. How effective was the program overall? How effective were the alternative promotional activities? Which techniques seemed to reach the largest audience? How can you improve the service?

Model for Initiating a Promotional Program

When first developing a promotional program for your on-line service, it would be wise to keep initial efforts simple. The following definition could serve as a guideline for your developing program.

> "Effective promotion of information must serve three basic functions; it must be 1) informational, 2) educational, and 3) persuasive."[33]

David Wax has discussed four or five basic techniques that should be utilized in promoting on-line services. Although his discussion of these techniques was rather cursory, each of the devices discussed should be elements of on-line promotional programs. In addition to the methods he has discussed, other devices that were found effective in the literature were included in this model for developing a promotional program for on-line services. In this section a core of eight promotional devices will be discussed.

The techniques to be discussed here are: advertisements in newspapers, articles in campus publications, brochures, demonstrations, mailings, newsletters, posters, and signs. It is not possible to describe all the

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[33]Stern and others, op. cit.

communication methods that ingenious librarians can use to disseminate their messages. The core of promotional methods described here is presented only as a guide to those initiating a promotional program. In addition, Appendix A will include discussion of additional techniques that can be used to promote these services.

Advertisements in Newspapers. Advertisements are paid announcements that should be used to spread general awareness of the service. The problems involved in writing and designing printed advertisements are similar to those encountered in producing other printed media. Simplicity should be the guide in developing advertisements.

Several questions need to be answered before placing an ad. What is the exact size of the area being purchased? How much is it going to cost? How often will it appear? And where will it be located? Once these questions have been answered, the planning can begin. One assumption that should be made in planning to make advertisements is that the reader really doesn't want to read the ad. Therefore, keep it as simple and easy to read as possible.

Location is an important element of advertising effectiveness. You really don't want it to appear on the sports page, do you? Would your target audience see it there? You might try placing the ad in a couple of different locations. You might even try a classified ad. The rates are much cheaper and the readership is sure to be different.

The position of the ad on the page is important, too. Corner spots are generally more effective. If you get stuck with an ad in the middle of a page, you might try the reverse technique to make it stand out. The reverse technique is simply that white letters are printed on a black background.

The classic formula for developing these and other printed materials is ATTENTION, INTEREST, DESIRE, and ACTION (AIDA). Get the reader's attention with a grabber; a statement, illustration, cartoon or other device that will catch his eye. Once his attention has been achieved you must then keep his interest. What can your service do for him? Make the message personally relevant. Emphasize the convenience of the service. Savings in research time and therefore more leisure time will keep his motivation. Make the reading worthwhile and ignite the reader's desire for your product. Emphasize products rather than services. That's really what he wants. Desire for your product will begin to grow. Lead him from attention, through interest and desire to an action statement. Where can he go for further information? The action may not be effectuated immediately, but the occasion may arise at some time in the future.

Advertising layout and design are very important. Because you only have a limited amount of space with which to spread your message, the elements of content, layout and design should combine into a meaningful and persuasive statement. The ad should have something in it that stands out. Take a look at commercial ads and see what works. Illustrations, statements, and cartoons can be effective. Boxing or bordering the ad can also make it stand out. Whatever you do, be sure to get some professional assistance.

Articles in Campus Publications. Articles in newspapers, faculty, and alumni bulletins and other campus publications can spread the news of your service to a large audience for little or no cost. The advantage of articles is simply that they are free advertising. Free publicity is the best publicity whenever it can be obtained and is favorable.

There are two types of articles that can be used to spread your news and publicize your program. They are news releases and feature stories. Frequently you will be writing the news releases yourself. You know exactly what needs to be said and writing it yourself allows you the opportunity of putting it into your own words. News releases are generally much shorter than feature and other stories. In releases a brief announcement is made on a particular subject. It should be written around a single topic. Usually a couple of paragraphs will suffice. Once written, the release is then sent to the editor. He can accept it or reject it. If it needs revision he can return it or revise it for you.

Feature stories are much longer and are in-depth treatments of a subject. More frequently, they are written by the reporters working for the newspaper.

In writing articles for publication, it is frequently wise to organize the story according to one of the schemes commonly used in newswriting. The inverted pyramid story structure is a helpful method of organizing and writing news stories. In this structure a general synopsis is made in the first paragraph and then each additional paragraph gives more depth to the story. The important facts are stated first and then those of progressively less significance are added as the story moves on towards its conclusion. The advantage of writing according to the inverted pyramid structure is that the editor has the option of cutting a large story down to two or three paragraphs and it still makes intelligible reading.

In submitting articles for publication, sequential dissemination of information can be quite effective. This usually begins with a brief announcement surrounding an event. Later, a short article is submitted which gives more information, more depth, to the subject. And finally, a lengthy article is written following the event.

In writing articles for publication it is important to include photographs whenever possible and whenever they add to the story. Editors know that a photo accompanying a story gives it a better chance of being read. (Additional information on photographs is included in Appendix A.)

Brochures. Brochures and pamphlets can be effective media for alerting the public of your service. In developing these materials professional assistance should be obtained whenever possible. The AIDA approach as outlined previously should be a guiding principle in constructing brochures.

Several questions need to be addressed before designing and preparing brochures. They concern the budget, format, size, method of composition, printing process, illustrations, paper, and number of copies required. Brochures and pamphlets should be attractive, easy to understand, and economical to revise. Paste up composition allows for easy revision.

In developing these printed devices, it would be wise to produce several different sets of brochures for selected users and for selected purposes. This might begin with the production of a general brochure that would serve as a brief introduction to the service. This brochure should satisfy the guidelines suggested by Wax. In addition, a set of specialized brochures could be developed for special target groups. Brochures could be developed for graduate students, faculty, and to serve special subject areas.

Demonstrations. Demonstrations have been identified as one of the more effective promotional devices. David Wax has stated that the demonstration should include:

> "a brief presentation on computer searching in general,
> the means for obtaining a search at the local library,

and some brief searches on topics suggested by potential users."[34]

The need for making the demonstrations spontaneous and individualized was repeatedly emphasized in the literature. When offering demos, the audience should be kept to a minimum size. It has been suggested that no more than twelve persons can be comfortably accommodated at a terminal. The smaller demonstrations also allow for more spontaneous and responsive presentations.

Effective demonstrations do not develop overnight. It will take a good deal of time, effort, and practice to make them consistently effective. They are frequently more effective when the program revolves around a particular discipline or subject area. Demonstrations to faculty seem to gather good responses.

The need for testing out the equipment well in advance of the demo was advised by several authors when the demo is to take place in unknown or new locations. It appears that sometimes feedback or interference can effect the phone connections and lead to inconsistent performance at the terminal.

Announcements of demonstrations can be made through department mailings, memos, and announcements in the calendar of the newspaper.

Alan Benenfeld states that if you are faced with a failing demo, one sure way to "snatch promotional victory from the jaws of defeat is to produce an impressive list of authors citing a faculty member in the audience."[35]

Direct Mail. Mailings to selected audiences can be effective methods of promotion. The advantages of mailings are: 1) the audience can be selected carefully, 2) the message can be personalized and made individually

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[34]Wax, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

[35]Benenfeld, op. cit., p. 7.5.

relevant, 3) a variety of different materials can be sent, 4) the response is easily measured, and 5) cost is minimal.

Benenfeld has stated that mailings have been very effective in promoting the service to the faculty. He stated: "Faculty have responded more to direct mailings than to other mechanisms."[36]

Douglas Ferguson has suggested that you experiment with small mailings to selected audiences or to single departments. Faculty appear to be fairly responsive to mailings which include a follow-up with memos.

Newsletters. Newsletters can also be used to disseminate your message for a minimal cost. Before putting a newsletter together, the following questions must be answered. For whom are the contents intended? How often will it be issued? Who will be responsible for putting it out? And, what methods of duplication and distribution will be used?

One major advantage of putting out your own newsletter is that you can tell the story in your own language and release them at the most propituous moment. Newsletters allow you flexibility and informality. If your library already has a newsletter that is being regularly issued, see if you can get a column in it. This will save you even more time and effort.

Professional assistance should be sought for the design and layout of the newsletter. All newsletters should have a letterhead or nameplate printed at the top of the first page. Each of the sections or articles should be titled and set apart. Use of space is important in separating sections. The content of the newsletter is flexible. You can include anything you decide upon, but generally they include: professional news, announcements, recent developments, and personal news.

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[36]Ibid., p. 5.5.

Posters. Posters should be designed and printed professionally. Posters can be the pride of your on-line service when they are effectively designed and prepared. Poorly designed ones that lack in professionalism can damage the image of your service. Professionalism comes across on all levels.

Posters should be used in the promotional program to improve general awareness of the service. They are also used to announce special events.

With professional assistance and guidance you can determine: how many copies you will need, which methods should be used in duplication, where they should be located, what they should contain, and how they will be designed.

When developing posters for the first time, get samples of effective ones that were developed elsewhere. Some outstanding ones have been developed at institutions discussed in Douglas Ferguson's recent article.

Signs. Signs are used for a number of purposes. The place to begin is at the work site. The area will have to be labeled so that browsers can know what goes on there. The hours of service should be posted as well as charges for the service. Copyright restrictions should also be posted according to the regulations of the code.

Outside the service area signs should be posted in point of need areas. Signs should be placed next to the printed indexes and abstracts that are also available on-line. Directional signs should be placed at strategic locations so that your service site can be located.

There are a number of methods and techniques for putting signs together. However, it would be best to get professional assistance. Stick-on letters and other sign making devices can be used, but when used by inexperienced hands they can result in handmade messes. Spacing and eyeflow should make

the signs easily readible. Professionalism should be present in all of the promotional materials developed to publicize the service.

Chapter IV

COMPARISON OF ON-LINE PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS WITH GENERAL LIBRARY PUBLICITY

Publicity and promotion for on-line bibliographic services is a subject that, until recently, has received little attention. In this chapter, promotional materials developed for on-line services in twenty-seven academic libraries will be compared with selected general promotional programs and materials that received awards from the John Cotton Dana Library Publicity Awards Committee. These promotional materials will be compared, in general, on professionalism in design and content. It is assumed that the John Cotton Dana Publicity Materials are some of the best of promotional materials produced in the United States.

Criteria for Evaluating the Materials

The criteria used for evaluating and comparing the promotional materials were gathered from a number of sources, but primarily from these three works:

1. Lendt, David L., ed. The Publicity Process. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1975.
2. Malickson, David L. and John W. Nason. Advertising--How to write the kind that works. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977.
3. Melcher, Daniel and Nancy Larrick. Printing and Promotion Handbook. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.

Each of these books lists guidelines and suggestions for preparing and developing promotional materials in a number of different formats. Although Melcher's work is somewhat dated, it still contains valuable information that can be of assistance to the beginner in developing promotional materials.

It would be impossible to discuss here all the guidelines that are presented in these three works. However, the writer will attempt to summarize here some of the more important concepts related to printing and promotion.

Malickson and Nason (1977) gave us two simple rules from which to begin. The materials must be simple and they must look like they are worthy of the reader's attention. If the material appears to be so poorly designed and constructed that it is nondescript, then something is wrong.

The classic formula for constructing printed promotional materials is: attention, interest, desire, and action. The initial intent is to get the reader's attention. This is frequently accomplished with a grabber; a striking illustration or statement that arouses the reader's curiosity. Questions and cartoons are other methods of getting the reader's attention. Interest must be maintained once you have the reader's awareness. The content of the message begins to work here. The personal value of your service to his/her needs awakens desire for the product. How much time that would save me! I could really get things done on time! That would be great! Convenience or some other unique selling proposition should be developed to whet his appetite. Then you move in for the sell. This leads up to an action phrase or statement. A location where additional information can be gathered should then be listed. The action need not take place immediately, but in the future this possibility is implicit. You have made the initial contact and it is now up to the reader to take action.

The content of the message is very important. The writing style should be simple. Short sentences written with familiar, unambiguous words tend to be effective. Imposing terminology and professional jargon should be avoided. Eschew excess verbosity.

The tone of the message is important also. The message should be personal. It should read as though it were written to one person. The use of contractions can be used to give it a personal tone. Above all, the statements should be clearly understood. There should be no confusion over what is meant by a particular phrase or statement.

Design is another important part of promotional planning. The elements of eyeflow, balance, readability, and simplicity should combine to make the material pleasing to the eye and easy to use. Headings and space should be used to separate sections of the materials. The use of space is very important. Generous margins tend to make the content of the piece appear much shorter than it really is, and therefore less imposing. Illustrations should also be included when they enhance the purpose or intent of the piece. These too should be kept as simple as possible. The choice of typeface is another important consideration. It should be simple, yet appealing. Readability and clarity should be the paramount concerns in selecting typefaces.

In general, the printed materials should look professional. The elements of design, content, and appearance should combine to get the message across in a persuasive manner.

Libraries Included in the Survey

On-Line Promotional Materials. Seventeen academic libraries had submitted samples of their promotional materials to the Machine Assisted Reference Section at the time of the study. In addition to these promotional materials, the materials presented in Douglas Ferguson's recent article (July 1977) were included in the comparison. It is interesting to note that not one of the ten academic libraries listed in his article had submitted samples of their materials to MARS. This is unusual, since they had been identified as institutions with model promotional materials.

The seventeen academic libraries that had submitted samples of their promotional materials to the Machine Assisted Reference Section of the American Library Association are listed in Table 1. Response to this materials gathering project of MARS was rather slow. Fourteen months following the beginning of the project only about two dozen institutions had submitted samples of their publicity materials. The institutions that had submitted materials may have learned about the project at the group's meetings at the ALA Conventions or through announcements in the MARS Newletter.

The institutions listed by Ferguson (1977) as possessing outstanding publicity materials are presented in Table 2. As stated before, it is interesting to note that none of the institutions listed by Ferguson had submitted samples of their materials to MARS at the time of this study.

John Cotton Dana Publicity Materials. During the course of the study, four scrapbooks of John Cotton Dana Publicity Materials were perused through interlibrary loan procedures. These materials are in high demand within the United States and are routed to several libraries when circulating. The award winning publicity materials that were perused during the study came from the following institutions: Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts; the University of Colorado, Denver; the University of Utah, Salt Late; and West Point Academy, New York.

Evaluation and Comparison of the Materials.

A general comparison of the materials in Ferguson's article with the materials in the MARS file supports Ferguson's contention that the samples of promotional materials in his article are among the best available to date. In addition to the ten samples listed in his

TABLE 1

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES SUBMITTING
SAMPLES OF THEIR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS
TO THE MACHINE ASSISTED REFERENCE SECTION

Florida State University

Kansas State University

Oregon State University

Texas A & M University

University of Arizona

University of California, Davis

University of California, San Diego

University of Colorado

University of Kentucky

University of Minnesota

University of Missouri, Kansas City

University of New Mexico

University of Oklahoma

University of the State of New York, Albany

University of Toledo

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Western Michigan University

TABLE 2

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES LISTED

IN DOUGLAS FERGUSON'S "MARKETING

ON-LINE SERVICES IN THE UNIVERSITY"

ON-LINE 1:15-23, July 1977.

Boston College

Harvard University

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Princeton University

Stanford University

University of California, Berkeley

University of Illinois

University of Newfoundland

University of Quebec

University of Rochester

article materials from three academic institutions in the MARS file could be considered outstanding. These materials came from the University of Minnesota, the University of New Mexico, and Texas A&M University.

The comparison of the materials in the MARS file and the materials listed by Ferguson revealed that there is a wide range in the level of sophistication and professionalism present in promotional materials for on-line services in academic libraries. Individual differences from campus to campus seem to outline the tone and flavor of the materials. The appearance and design of the materials varied from announcements that were printed in ditto on 8½ x 11 sheets of white paper to flyers and brochures that were printed offset on colored paper.

In general there was room for improvement in nearly all of the materials in the sample. Only two or three of the samples utilized a device to catch the reader's attention. Most of the materials were printed (typed) on 8½ x 11 sheets of white paper. Only four of the samples had a title or logo that was unique to the service. It would be unfair to categorize all of the materials on one or another criteria. However, it appears that we have much to learn in advertising effectively for these services.

In content most of the materials support David Wax's belief that more information is provided than the potential user is likely to read. Some of the materials were brief and to the point. Unfortunately this is not the case for the majority of the materials in the sample. Most of the materials could hardly be considered attention gathering devices. They were simply too complex and intimidating. In some instances, technical jargon was used which would probably not be understood by most users. Unfortunately, it appears that most of the developers of these

promotional materials forgot the first cardinal rule, which is to "keep it simple."

The comparison of the promotional awards for on-line services with the John Cotton Dana Award Winning Materials did not reveal the great differences that the writer had expected to find. The best of the promotional materials for on-line services did not differ dramatically in design and appearance from the John Cotton Dana Materials.

The materials that were perused in the John Cotton Dana academic category could hardly be considered outstanding. Some of the best materials that had been developed to promote the use of on-line services were superior to the materials in the John Cotton Dana Scrapbooks. A good example would be the materials that were developed at the University of California, Berkeley, or the materials that have been developed at MIT.

The writer perused only a small sample of John Cotton Dana Scrapbooks (four of six in the academic category) and it is hoped that the materials that were perused are not representative of the best publicity efforts available in the United States.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Results of the Study

As a result of the review of the literature a brief outline of the history of computerized bibliographic data services was presented in Chapter I.

The review of the literature identified four general and six specialized works regarding promotion for on-line services in academic libraries. These materials were discussed individually in Chapter II.

Program planning for promotion of on-line services was discussed in Chapter III where at least six levels of activity were identified. They are: 1) general program guidelines and statement of objectives, 2) research and study of the problem, 3) identification of user characteristics, 4) selection of strategies to achieve objectives, 5) operation of the program, and 6) evaluation and revision. Each of these activities was discussed separately.

A model promotional program with a core of eight promotional devices was discussed in Chapter III. This core of promotional devices was presented as a guide for those developing a promotional program for their on-line service for the first time. The devices discussed in the core program included: advertisements in newspapers, articles in campus publications, brochures, demonstrations, mailings, newsletters, posters, and signs. Each of these materials was discussed separately and guidelines for preparing such materials were presented in the discussion. In addition to these eight devices, a list of additional techniques was presented in Appendix A.

In Chapter IV promotional materials that had been developed in 27 academic libraries were compared with general promotional materials that had been awarded John Cotton Dana Library Publicity Awards.

The examination of the promotional materials in the MARS file and the materials included in Ferguson's article revealed that there is a wide range in the level of professionalism and sophistication present in promotional materials for on-line services in academic libraries. It appears that we have much to learn about effectively advertising for these services.

The content of the materials perused supports David Wax's belief that more information is included than the potential user is likely to read. Many of the materials were too lengthy and the use of professional jargon caused many of the materials to appear to be too complex and intimidating.

The comparison of the on-line promotional materials with the John Cotton Dana Scrapbooks did not reveal the great differences that would have been expected. The "best" of the promotional materials in the United States did not differ dramatically from the best of the promotional materials for on-line services.

In general, it could be said that even the "best" promotional materials in the United States have considerable room for improvement.

Conclusion.

It was the purpose of this study to make a review of the literature in order that promotion for on-line services could be approached in a systematic manner. It is hoped that as a result of this study librarians and managers will find it easier to produce and develop promotional materials for their on-line bibliographic services.

Publicity and promotion appear to be areas where librarians are lacking in skills, talent, and education. If there is an area in which librarians have been ineffectual it is in the area of marketing and promoting our services. This writer's investigation into the "best" of the promotional materials that have been developed in academic libraries in the United States has graphically demonstrated this fact.

If we hope to be truly relevant to our public(s) we must at least show them what it is we have to offer. Effective promotion and publicity appears to be an area of study where we have much to learn from the other related disciplines. This subject has been neglected for far too long by the members of our profession.

It is hoped that other investigations of this type will be conducted in order that effective promotion and publicity for all library services may one day be a reality.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF PROMOTION

It would be impossible to describe all the ingenious methods that can be used to spread the word of your on-line service. In this appendix some alternative methods of promotion will be discussed to suggest some possibilities. Each campus is unique and those techniques that are most appropriate to your users should be used.

Artwork. Artwork can be used for a variety of purposes. Drawings or paintings can be used for description, expression, or decoration. Pictures of the operation of your service could be placed in strategic locations around the library and around the campus to spread the message. Artwork should be developed around a theme: namely an activity or a place. The method of presentation can reveal a good deal about the atmosphere in the service area. Always get professional assistance when developing materials in these formats.

Bookmarks. Bookmarks are inexpensive devices than can attract a good deal of attention to the service. Due to the limited amount of space only the most essential information should be included on the bookmark. The service should be identified, the hours should be listed, and a number or location where additional information could be obtained should be included. Bookmarks should always be kept simple. Generous margins and a simple message tend to make them appealing.

Classes. Although it would be unusual to develop a special course around your on-line service special programs could be developed for announcing the service to library instruction courses. Graduate level

courses are appropriate and merit special attention and announcements regarding on-line bibliographic services.

Exhibits and Displays. Special exhibits and displays may be developed to promote the service. These programs should usually be planned at least two to three weeks in advance. Professional assistance will be required to develop stylish posters and signs for the service. Special exhibits could be set up during registration and at other events when you have a captive audience. At these events it would be wise to have the terminal on hand. Other announcement type displays can be set up on a regular basis in the library and around the campus.

Films. Special instructional and educational films could be developed to announce your service. These could be developed for class/group use or for outreach. A good deal of planning and preparation goes into the production of a film. Some of the works listed in the bibliography should be consulted for information regarding the development of materials in this format.

Illustrations. Illustrations can be used to gather attention to articles you are submitting to the campus publications. Illustrations on posters and other display devices gather a good deal of attention. Professional assistance is frequently required in the planning and design stages.

Photographs. Photographs can also be used to spice up your work area and they can gather greater attention when added to an article for publication. A file of photographs should be maintained in the publicity file for submission along with articles for publication. The trick to developing successful photographs is to "keep it simple." Usually, someone on the staff is adept at photography. Take advantage of your resources.

Radio. Most campus radio stations have time available for spot announcements and for brief five to ten minute interviews. Special news reports of your service might be made with the daily news. Get acquainted with the students working at the campus radio station(s). They might like to hear your story more than you realize.

Sample Searches. Free sample searches could be offered to selected faculty members to promote the service. By selecting prominent members of the faculty you can spread the news of your service quickly. Sample searches posted in prominent areas around the work area sell the service quickly. Searches run on current topics can be used to show the advantages of your service to the potential users and to the library staff.

Slide-Tape Shows. Slide-tape programs can easily be developed to promote the service. Professional assistance is usually required in developing effective programs. Once the program has been developed it could be shown to selected groups or it could be left on display so that users can view the program at their convenience. Once developed, these materials are easily revised.

Telephone Answering Machines. During the hours that the service is closed a telephone answering machine might be used to spread your message. Elsewhere on the campus a core of telephone answering machines may be used by the information desk to answer questions. Inquire about having your on-line service announced through this general campus program.

Television. A number of possibilities exist in the area of television. A video production of the service could be developed and displayed by the campus television station. Whenever dealing with the video medium professsional advice and assistance should be utilized.

Tours. Whenever general or specialized library tours take place

the service should be discussed. Arrangements might be made so that when the group gets to your area someone in your office could lead the discussion. Whenever a group has come for a tour, it is advisable to give them something to take with them. If nothing else is available, a simple bookmark would help in spreading your message.

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